

## David G Smith

### Serving the Song and a Life Sentence

*“When a song idea appears, I’m there to serve that idea – not to change it or judge it, not to direct traffic. I’m there to let the song direct me.”*

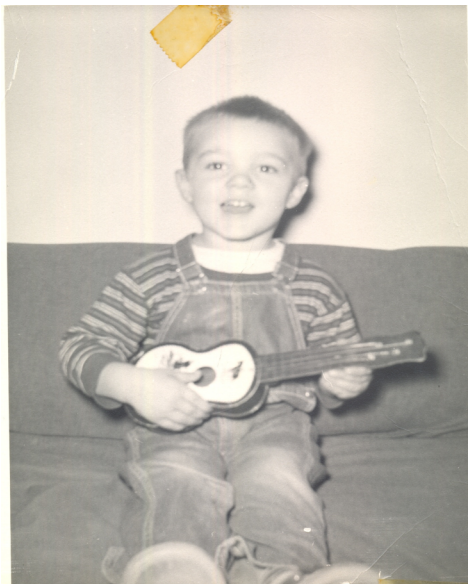
With over one thousand songs to his name, David G Smith’s life sentence is serving the song; an immense passion, and an incredible ride. Imagine an endless roller coaster, gliding over Iowa farmlands, scaling the Colorado Rocky Mountains, and dancing down Nashville’s Music Row. Imagine the peaks, valleys, curves, straight-aways, and loop-de-loops, the speeding up, and the slowing down, all experienced with the exhilaration of just what might come next.



Smith is a singer/songwriter specializing in Acoustic, Folk, and Americana music who digs for bits of truth, molds them into no BS lyrics, and delivers them with a voice and music that ranges from dirt funk to intimate. It has never been “hey look at me” for Smith. It has always been about connecting to the listener, to their life, to their story. Smith often quotes Pete Townsend – *“I can start the song but it is the listener who completes it.”*

### Buckle Up for the Initial Climb

Born into a musical family in the hills of Eastern Iowa’s Mississippi Valley, Smith took obligatory piano lessons - Thanks, Mom! After mastering the plastic version, he mastered a real guitar on his own. Between milking cows and playing basketball Smith began writing songs during his high school years.



After his first semester at the University of Iowa, Smith dropped out of college and formed the band, **Clay Mills**, with his brother, Ed. It’s been said that they “kicked Eastern Iowa butt” with a mix of cover tunes and Smith’s original material. Looking toward his future, Smith returned to Iowa City, completed his education, and to this day reluctantly follows the shenanigans of Iowa Hawkeye Basketball. Smith’s **“Carry Them River”** is a tribute to two fishermen along the Iowa River written while attending U of I.



### First Curve to the West

Climbing steadily, Smith’s takes a turn to the west to Denver, Colorado. During the next 10 years, he was a co-founder of and keyboard player for **Robin Banks Band**. This all-original rock band toured up and down the eastern slope and throughout the Rockies.

They even had their own video way before MTV and the web! Robin

Banks’ set list included several of Smith’s songs. They played to packed houses from the Little Bear Inn to Promoter Barry Fey’s Rainbow Theater. For a time, RB was managed by Ed “Cass” Cassidy, drummer for the 60’s band, Spirit. A self-titled single with one of Smith’s songs on it was released and can still be found on clandestine websites.

Following **Robin Banks**, Smith continued his ride, balancing a day job, family, and baby daughter along the Colorado switchbacks until his route led him to the trio, **Every Night Live** with brother Ed and Doug Garvey. Smith's songs reflected his musical influences - jazz, blues, rock, and country, with a dose of Little Feat, Dr. John, and Sly Stone.

### **Hang On to Head South**

Following his passion for songwriting, Smith loaded up his family and moved to Nashville, TN, where his roller coaster ride took off. The highs of being in the songwriting capitol of the world, the chance to meet/learn from some of the best writers on the planet were mixed with the heartbreak of the breakup of his marriage and his daughter moving back to Iowa. After 5 years to the month in "Music City, USA," Smith made the only decision he could; he moved back to Iowa to help raise his daughter. His heartfelt "**The Meaning Of Love**" was written during this time.

Smith spent the 90's in Iowa writing and writing and writing. **Evolution**, his limited edition three CD set includes several songs written during this time period. Living on the shore of Storm Lake, IA, Smith co-founded **Pangaea**, a four-piece band whose set list included "**Ivory**" inspired by the illegal ivory trade and dwindling elephant population. While making a living, raising his daughter, writing songs, playing music, it's surprising Smith had time for a social life and wedding bells.



### **More Ups Than Downs**

Following his daughter's high school graduation in 1997, Smith began monthly commutes to Nashville with the focus on "*learning to write the best song I can write.*" Throughout this period Smith was mentored by songwriting greats Hugh Prestwood, Angela Kaset, Rick Beresford, Darrell Scott, Beth Nielson-Chapman, and Mary Gauthier, attended several songwriter retreats, and participated in countless co-writes with some of Nashville's best writers. His song catalog began to explode, but not without struggle.



knew he needed a "come-to-Jesus" talk with himself and where he was headed. So, he signed up for a no-bullshit songwriting retreat with Darrell Scott, Beth Nielson-Chapman, and Mary Gauthier and was promptly knocked on his ass. Both Darrell and Mary looked him straight in the eye and challenged him to stop writing songs for others, stop chasing the Nashville music scene, and start writing for himself and recording those songs and getting his music out there. This loop-de-loop, and subsequent soul searching, led Smith to leave his 20-year "day job" as an investigator for the IA Board of Medicine and to put his "artist hat" back on. (He likes hats!)

As any writer can attest to, trying to make your way in the Nashville songwriting world can be very competitive, critical, and unforgiving. Smith never let the challenge of songwriting and the music business stop him. There were times when disappointment has slowed him down, but as he says, "*If you want to run with the big dogs, then quit your whining.*"

### **The Loop-De-Loop**

After a collective 15 years in Nashville writing songs for other artists to record, Smith







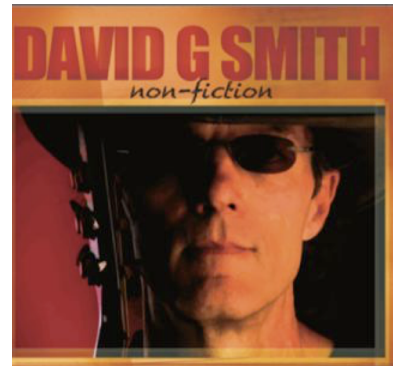
A few months later, with the help of friends and producers, Miles Wilkinson and Buddy Mondlock, Smith created his first full-length album titled **Non-Fiction** at Bolton Farms Studio in Nashville, featuring a special guest appearance by the incomparable Mary Gauthier.

*"Non-Fiction is a solid debut for the longtime songwriter – acoustic rock that's sometimes funky and sometimes gentle, smartly produced and performed with conviction."* - Jeff Ignatius, Quad Cities Reader.

### Thrill Ride

**Non-Fiction** is a showcase of 13 wonderfully written songs, 10 written solo by Smith. Long-time friends and Nashville writers, Jesse McRae, Lori Shropshire, Deanna Walker, and Barry Dean were co-writers. As Smith relates, in Nashville outstanding songs are the norm, not the exception, and session players know the difference. *"If a song is average they will simply and nicely thank you for the work and be on their way."*

During his **Non-Fiction** sessions, as legendary drummer/percussionist Kenny Malone was preparing to lay down tracks for **"In Here"** and reading the lyric, he commented over the isolation booth mic, "This is a great song." Jonell Mosser, who lent her considerable singing talent to **"Her Body Won't Lie"** and **"The Edge,"** gave Smith a hug saying, "These are great songs." Shortly after the record was pressed, one of Smith's co-writers began to cry as she read the lyric to **"In This Cage."** *"Dammit! You made me cry,"* she said even before she heard the song. (Songwriters love to make people cry.)



The amazing collection of players on **Non-Fiction** comprise a who's who list of both legendary musicians and new voices - Dan Dugmore (James Taylor, Linda Ronstadt), Verlon Thompson (Guy Clark), Jonell Mosser (Etta James, Bonnie Raitt), Buddy Mondlock (Janis Ian, Garth Brooks, Art Garfunkel), Kenny Malone (who has played with more Grammy winners than a body can count!), Bryn Davies (Peter Rowan, Justin Townes Earle), Jelly Roll Johnson (just check him out), Suzi Ragsdale (Guy Clark, Darrell Scott), Melissa Greener (award-winning emo-folk-crooner), and Mike Willis (2008 ASCAP Outstanding Songwriter/Performer Award).

Since Smith was living in both Iowa and Nashville, two sold-out CD release shows were held. Over three hundred people packed the Redstone Room inside and out in Davenport, Iowa where Smith performed with the brothers Ed and Dan, nephew Dillon, and niece Amy. The house was a-rockin'! Recipients of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Boys Town shared stories, several fans contributed auction items, and the audience was generous with appreciation, applause, and donations.



At the Bluebird Café in Nashville, **Non-Fiction** producers, Buddy Mondlock and Miles Wilkinson, harp-master Jelly Roll Johnson, and Smith had the time of their lives as they mesmerized the audience with one great song after another. Smith has shared stages with other notable artists as Justin Townes Earle, Ramblin' Jack Elliot, Bruce Robison and Kelly Willis, Rory Block, Rissi Palmer, and Kevin Gordon. Whether performing solo or with a band, on a large stage or in your living room, Smith's performances are honest, engaging, and powerful. His songs speak the truth. Radio stations across the country were very supportive of **Non-Fiction**, helping it climb into the top 50 of the "Roots 66" chart.

### Still Climbing

Following **Non-Fiction**, Smith released two live CDs: **From the Ellen Kennedy Fine Arts Center** (his opening set for Justin Townes Earle), a digital-only release; and **Live From Nashville** joined by his musical family, brothers Ed J, Danny Ray, and Dillon T recorded at the famed Third & Lindsley club/Nashville. This would be the first professional recording of these Smith family members.



Next came **One House**, Smith's 2<sup>nd</sup> studio release filled with old friends, mentors, collaborators and new inspiration in 2014. Blue Miller (who recorded and toured with several music legends including Bob Seger, Albert King, Peabo Bryson, and Isaac Hayes, and co-produced India Arie's breakout Grammy nominated album, *Acoustic Soul*) produced **One House** giving Smith's real-life observations depth and guts. What a thrill! The release opens with the title cut, "**One House**" a call to action for anyone living on planet earth. Smith's storytelling shines in "**Jesus Is In Prison**" a surprising story of death row redemption, and "**Angels Flew**" celebrating the spontaneous armada that rescued Staten Islanders on 9/11. In each song on **One House**, the stories unfold effortlessly over strong rhythms and unforgettable melodies.

Mary Gauthier, once again, makes an appearance ("**Ivory**"); Inda Arie backup singer, Chantae Cann and America's Got Talent semi-finalist Alicia Michilli sing BGVs. A collection of 10 original songs demonstrating Smith's increasing vocal and writing talent. The players **One House** include his brother Ed J Smith (electric guitar), Joe Robinson (electric guitar), Denny Hemingson (Wiesenborn acoustic lap), Jelly Roll Johnson (harp), John Catchings (cello), Larry Franklin (fiddle), Doug Kahan (bass), and Jon Fletcher (drums)

**One House** reached the #1 position on both Roots Music Report's Alternative Folk and Top 50 Iowa Album Charts. It also landed on No Depression/Lee Zimmerman's list of "10 Terrific Albums To Listen To Right Now" and inspiring Zimmerman to note:

*"[Smith] comes across with the same sort of weathered resolve that best exemplifies fellow travelers like Kris Kristofferson and Townes Van Zandt."*

Not slowing down at all, Smith followed with, **The Family Smith: LIVE @ The Redstone Room**, a box CD/DVD set featuring 8 songs, two never before released. Another recording of the talented Smith family members. Audio and video - What a treat!

During this time Smith's songs were featured on TNT's "Saving Grace", Travel Channel's "Rissi Palmer's Country", and Lifetime's "Chasing Nashville". He earned First Place in the 2008 International Song Competition, country category for "**Made for You**". Smith's song "**Doesn't Take Much Light**" (co-written with Dean Madonia), a true story about a scout leader, went viral in the Boy Scout community and as a result he was invited to perform the song to 5000 Eagle Scouts at the 2015 Centennial Celebration of the National Order of the Arrow (NOAC). His song "**Angels Flew**" -a 9-11 commemorative about the rescue and relief effort that occurred during this tragic event- is on the 9-11 Memorial Museum's Artist Registry.

**First Love**, Smith's 6<sup>th</sup> album in as many years, was released in 2016. Once again, Blue Miller's stellar production showcases Smith's vocals, lyrics, melodies, and groove.

*"First Love is 10 deeply felt originals on the cusp of bluesy Americana and righteous roots fervor. It's different. Captivating."* – Mike Greenblatt, Classicalite

**First Love** includes original songs written by Smith and co-writes with Keeley Valentino, Deanna Walker, and Tom Favreau. Every song continues Smith's mission to write the truth ranging from difficult topics of lost love, Alzheimer's, fear, and death, combined with the light-hearted

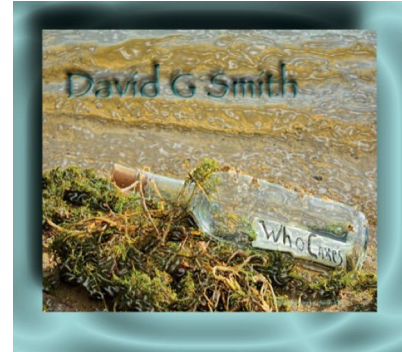




**“Nightlife in the Stix”** and **“I Can’t Tell”** - the latter song featuring celebrated bluesman, Keb’ Mo’. Smith’s friends from **One House** were in the studio again: Doug Kahan, Jon Fletcher, Joe Robinson, Denny Hemingson, Jelly Roll Johnson, Edward J Smith, John Catchings, Larry Franklin, Alicia Michilli, Chantae Cann (BGVs), and for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive studio album, Mary Gauthier. Smith dedicated **First Love** to his father Al and Uncle Tom, who were struggling with Alzheimer’s and at the same time raised money for the Alzheimer’s Research.



**First Love** did very well on radio holding the #1 position for several weeks on both Roots Music Report’s Alternative Folk and Top 50 Iowa Album Charts. It also made RMR’s “Best of 2018” list thanks to the support of all the amazing Hey Dave Music radio listeners.



In 2019, Smith released **Who Cares**, wonderfully produced, engineered and mixed once again by Blue Miller. (The man is brilliant!) The album features 12 original songs with old friends and long-time collaborators and co-writers including Tom Favreau, Dean Madonia, and Karen Leipziger. Smith (vocals/acoustic guitar/resonator/Hammond C3) brought in some of his favorite players Doug Kahan (upright, fretless & 6-string bass), Steve Grossman (drums/percussion), Danny Ray Smith (cajon/rainstick/shakers/cabasa/ tambourine), Joe Robinson (acoustic + electric guitars/resonator), Larry Franklin (fiddle), and Tony Harrell (keyboards/accordion). Alicia Michilli and Chantae Cann added whispers and wails in all the right places. Last but not least, friend and mentor Mary Gauthier, steps up to the mic and sings a duet with Smith on **“Shine.”**

On **Who Cares**, Smith once again delivers the truth, but this time it’s “... at an incredibly high price – the loss of my Nashville producer...and friend, Blue Miller. You seldom find genius, heart, and humility inside one human being but Blue had all three in spades. Ironically, during the creation of **Who Cares**, Blue and I co-wrote: (‘There will never come a time) **I Won’t Remember You’**. Who knew!”

**Who Cares** was Blue’s last completed project.

The characters and topics on **Who Cares** speak in concerned voices and hushed tones - the dilemma of truck drivin’ **“Mary Alice”**; **“Jesse James”** and choices made; **“Just To Feel The Wind”** (written with Dean Madonia) “where I looked through the curtain at death face-up on a highway early on in my life; and **“Without Water”** – a song about the overuse and abuse of our fresh water supply.” The title cut, **“Who Cares”**, ended up last in the song order. “I kept looking for a spot earlier in the album. But songs do what they will if you leave them alone – and **‘Who Cares’** had the last word. Given the topics touched on in **“Medicine, Mary Alice, Without Water, Shine, Mi Familia,”** the title cut spoke when and where it was supposed to.



**Who Cares** ... it doesn’t matter, as long as somebody does.”

## The Ride Continues

As Smith writes in **"Shine,"**

*What is our life but a fire that dances  
What does it matter that flicker of flame  
But what if its light held someone else's second chances to catch a home bound train*

It's an incredible ride for David G Smith and he appreciates every peak, valley, curve, and straight-away. He especially appreciates the loop-de-loops. Smith and his wife continue a long-standing practice of giving back in recognition of their opportunities and advantages. Smith's Hey Dave Music Company contributes a portion of proceeds to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Boys Town, and several others in need.

***Thanks for the Ride! – David***



For more information please visit: [davidgsmithmusic.com](http://davidgsmithmusic.com)

